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ABSTRACT

A study examined the relationship between state-level administrative structure and the current and expected roles of state supervisors of vocational agriculture. A survey instrument designed to collect information regarding state-level administrative structure for vocational education was mailed to fifty head state supervisors of vocational agriculture in the United States. A total of 504 high school vocational agriculture teachers and 196 state supervisors of vocational education in nineteen randomly selected states were surveyed to determine perceptions of the current and expected roles of state supervisors and local school personnel. The states analyzed were categorized into four groups with respect to degree of administrative authority. In all groups both state supervisors and teachers had similar perceptions of the current and expected role of state supervisors and neither teachers nor supervisors perceived any great difference between state-level administrative structure and such activities as research and evaluation activities and public relations activities. Recommendations call for further investigation in the following areas: actual activities performed by state supervisors, barriers impeding supervisors from performing supervisory activities, and the degree and nature of actual contact between state supervisors and local teachers and programs. (A list of thirty-seven administrator activities is appended.) (MN)

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STATE-LEVEL ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND THE ROLE OF STATE SUPERVISORS OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STATE-LEVEL ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND THE ROLE OF STATE SUPERVISORS OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE

Administrative structure for vocational education at the state level has concerned vocational educators for several years. Since the Vocational Education Act of 1963, state and federal governments have struggled with questions concerning the administration of programs of vocational education, including vocational agriculture.

The authority for state supervision and administration of local programs of vocational agriculture was established by the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. The Act mandated a state board for vocational education which was to develop a state plan for vocational education. The Act also provided for state-level administrators of vocational education, including a state director and state and district supervisors (Roberts, 1971).

Passage of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, the Vocational Education Act of 1963 and the Vocational Amendments in 1968 and 1972 brought about increased variation in administrative structures at the state level (Gentry, 1978). Divisions of vocational education within state departments of education traditionally were organized by occupational areas including agriculture, home economics, distribution, trades and industries, and business and office education; now many are organized according to functions performed such as secondary programs, post-secondary programs, adult education, special needs, and career development. The emphasis in many states has shifted from supervision of instruction to providing services. (Wenrich, 1974).

The goal of state-level supervision of vocational education is to promote, develop, maintain and improve instruction (Roberts, 1971). Roberts further enumerated the following specific activities of vocational supervisors in state departments of education: 1) assisting in the planning of state and national programs; 2) assisting teachers in improving methods of instruction and planning instructional materials; 3) securing adequate facilities; 4) organizing and improving activities of student organizations in vocational education; and 5) evaluating the results of the instructional program conducted by the local teacher. Although Schroeder (1962), Taylor (1961), Cornell (1976), Luther (1972) and others have investigated the role of state supervisors of vocational education, few studies have recently addressed the role of state supervisors of vocational agriculture.

Wright (1926) indicated that the perceptions of the role of state supervisors vary greatly among the groups involved with the programs being supervised. The supervisors' perceptions of their responsibilities are important, and the perceptions of the supervisory functions as seen by the teachers being served are of major importance (Wright, 1926).

As the state-level administrative structure for vocational education changes, the role of state supervisors of vocational agriculture may change. Shoemaker (1967), Nyquist (1967), Iannaccone (1967), Rice (1967) and others have discussed the relationships of structure and the role of supervisors. The changes in administrative structure warranted further study. The role of state supervisors of vocational agriculture needed to be investigated as well as the relationship between state-level administrative structure and the role of state supervisors of vocational agriculture.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of state-level administrative structure for vocational education within state departments of education?
2. What is the current role of state supervisors of vocational agriculture as perceived by high school teachers and state supervisors of vocational agriculture?
3. What is the expected role of state supervisors of vocational agriculture as perceived by high school teachers and state supervisors of vocational agriculture?
4. What is the relationship between current and expected roles of state supervisors of vocational agriculture?
5. What is the relationship between state-level administrative structure for vocational education and current and expected roles of state supervisors of vocational agriculture?

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in two phases. The population for the first phase of the study was the 50 head state supervisors of vocational agriculture in the United States. The head state supervisors responded to an instrument developed to collect information regarding state-level administrative structure for vocational education. The instrument was validated by a panel of teacher educators and by Dr. Darrell L. Parks, State Supervisor in Ohio. Data were collected by mailed questionnaire and telephone follow-up from the 50 head state supervisors. States were categorized into four groups based on state-level administrative structure.

The target populations for the second phase of the study were all high school teachers of vocational agriculture in the United States and all state supervisors of vocational agriculture in the United States. The samples were 504 high school teachers of vocational agriculture and all 196 state supervisors of vocational agriculture. States were randomly selected from each of the four groups determined by type of administrative structure. Teachers were randomly selected from the 19 states.

The second instrument was developed to collect information regarding the role of state supervisors of vocational agriculture. Two forms of the instrument were developed. One form requested perceptions of the current role of state supervisors and of local school personnel. Role was defined as the degree of authority of state supervisors for each of 37 statements compared to degree of authority of local school personnel. The second form requested perceptions of the expected role of state supervisors and local personnel, indicated by the degree of authority for each of the same 37 statements. One-half of the teachers in each state in the study were randomly assigned to one form of the instrument. All state supervisors within a state received the same form of the instrument, either current role or expected role. The form of the instrument was randomly assigned to each state.

The instruments were field tested with 50 high school vocational agriculture teachers in Ohio. Reliability coefficients were computed for both instruments.

Data were collected by mailed questionnaire with 90. percent of the state supervisors and 78. percent of the teachers responding. The data were analyzed using the services of the Instruction and Research Computer Center of The Ohio State University.

FINDINGS

State-Level Administrative Structure

The 50 states were categorized into four groups based on the information provided by the head state supervisors concerning state-level administrative structure for vocational education. Two distinct groups of states were identified: states where state supervisors of vocational agriculture have responsibilities in areas in addition to vocational agriculture and states where state supervisors of vocational agriculture have no responsibilities in areas other than vocational agriculture. There are 20 states in the first group and 30 states in the second group. Refer to Figure 1.

These two groups of states were further categorized into four subgroups on the basis of whether or not the head state supervisor of vocational agriculture reports directly to the state director of vocational education. In the 20 states where state supervisors have responsibilities in addition to vocational agriculture, four head state supervisors report directly to the state director of vocational education. The remaining 16 head state supervisors report to someone other than the state director of vocational education. In the 30 states where state supervisors of vocational agriculture have no responsibilities in addition to vocational agriculture, 15 head state supervisors report directly to the state director of vocational education and 15 head state supervisors report to someone other than the state director of vocational education.

Role of State Supervisors and Local Personnel

Teachers and state supervisors indicated their perceptions of the role of state supervisors of vocational agriculture and local school personnel (teachers, supervisors, administrators) in terms of the degree of authority of each group for 37 activity statements. Degree of authority was indicated on a scale of one (no authority for the activity) to seven (a high degree of authority for the activity).

State Supervisors of Vocational Agriculture Have Other Responsibilities		State Supervisors of Vocational Agriculture Have No Other Responsibilities	
Head State Supervisor Does Not Report Directly To Vocational Director	Head State Supervisor Reports Directly To Vocational Director	Head State Supervisor Does Not Report Directly To Vocational Director	Head State Supervisor Reports Directly To Vocational Director
— STRUCTURE 1 —	— STRUCTURE 2 —	— STRUCTURE 3 —	— STRUCTURE 4 —
(16 states)	(4 states)	(15 states)	(15 states)

Increasing Degree of Authority of State Supervisors →

Increasing Degree of Direct Contact with Vocational Agriculture Programs →

Figure 1. State-Level Administrative Structure

The activity statements were grouped into four areas: administrative activities; improvement of instruction activities; research and evaluation activities; and public relations activities. A list of the activity statements is included in the Appendix.

Current Role

Supervisors and teachers did not differ in their perceptions of the current role of state supervisors. Both groups ranked the current degree of authority of state supervisors for the four areas in the following descending order: research and evaluation; improvement of instruction; administrative; and public relations activities. Teachers perceived the degree of authority of state supervisors for administrative, improvement of instruction and research activities at a value of four on the scale and current degree of authority for public relations activities at a value of three. State supervisors indicated a degree of authority for state supervisors at a value of four on the scale for administrative and improvement of instruction activities, at a value of five for research and evaluation activities and at a value of three for public relations activities. Refer to Figure 2.

For the current degree of authority of local school personnel, the state supervisors and teachers differed slightly in the ranking of the four categories of activities. Teachers ranked the degree of authority of local personnel for the four areas in the following descending order: public relations; administrative; and improvement of instruction and research and evaluation activities. State supervisors ranked the current degree of authority of local personnel for the four areas in the following descending order: public relations; improvement of instruction; research

and evaluation; and administrative activities. Teachers perceived the degree of authority of local personnel at a value of five on the scale for administrative, improvement of instruction, and research and evaluation activities and at a value of six for public relations activities. State supervisors perceived the degree of authority of local personnel at a value of five for administrative and research and evaluation activities and at a value of six for improvement of instruction activities and public relations activities. Refer to Figure 3.

Expected Role

Teachers and state supervisors did not differ in their ranking of the four groups of activities according to the expected role of state supervisors of vocational agriculture. Both groups ranked the expected degree of authority of state supervisors for the four areas in the following descending order: research and evaluation; improvement of instruction; administrative; and public relations activities. Teachers indicated the degree of authority of state supervision at a value of four on the seven-point scale for administrative and improvement of instruction activities, at a value of five for research and evaluation and at a value of three for public relations. State supervisors indicated the expected degree of authority at a value of four for administrative and improvement of instruction activities, at a value of five for research activities, and a value of three for public relations activities. Refer to Figure 4.

The teachers and supervisors also agreed on the ranking of the four groups of activities according to their perceptions of the expected degree of authority of local school personnel. Both groups ranked the expected degree of authority for the four areas in the following descending order: public relations; administrative; research and evaluation; and improvement of instruction activities. Teachers and supervisors indicated the expected

degree of authority of local personnel at a value of five for administrative, improvement of instruction and research and evaluation activities and at a value of six for public relations activities. Refer to Figure 5.

Comparison of Current and Expected Roles

In comparing the perceptions of current degree of authority of state supervisors and local personnel with the expected degree of authority of state supervisors and local personnel, few differences were indicated by teachers or supervisors. In all comparisons except two, both teachers and supervisors indicated the current and expected degree of authority for the activities at the same level. The teachers indicated the current degree of authority of state supervisors for research and evaluation activities in the 3.5 to 4.49 level on the seven-point scale and the expected degree of authority in the 4.5 to 5.49 level. For the degree of authority of local personnel for improvement of instruction activities, the state supervisors indicated a lower expected degree of authority (4.6) than current degree of authority (5.5).

Relationships Between Role and
State-Level Administrative Structure

In analyzing the relationships between the current and expected roles of state supervisors of vocational agriculture and state-level administrative structure, Kendall's tau c coefficients were calculated. The coefficients express the relationship between perceptions of teachers and state supervisors on a scale of one to seven (no authority to high authority) and state-level administrative structure. Administrative structure was indicated on a continuum from low contact with local vocational agriculture programs and teachers and indirect reporting to the state director of vocational education to high contact with local teachers and programs and direct reporting to the state director of vocational education. Refer to Figure 1.

Figure 2 Current Role of State Supervisors of Vocational Agriculture

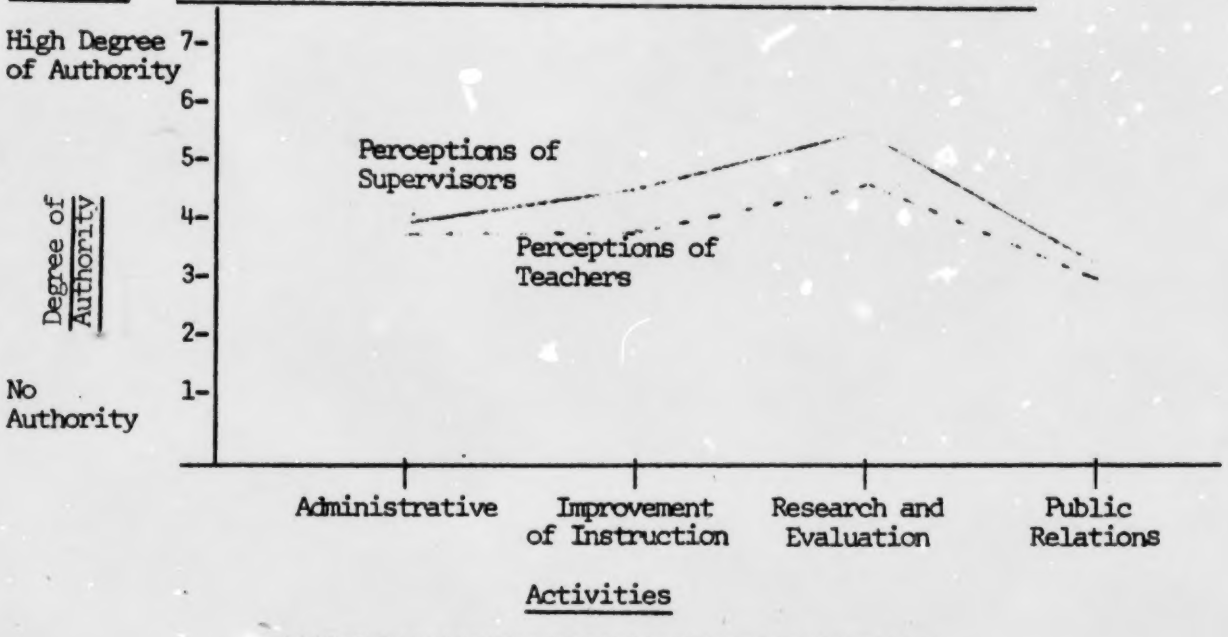

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Figure 3 Current Role of Local School Personnel

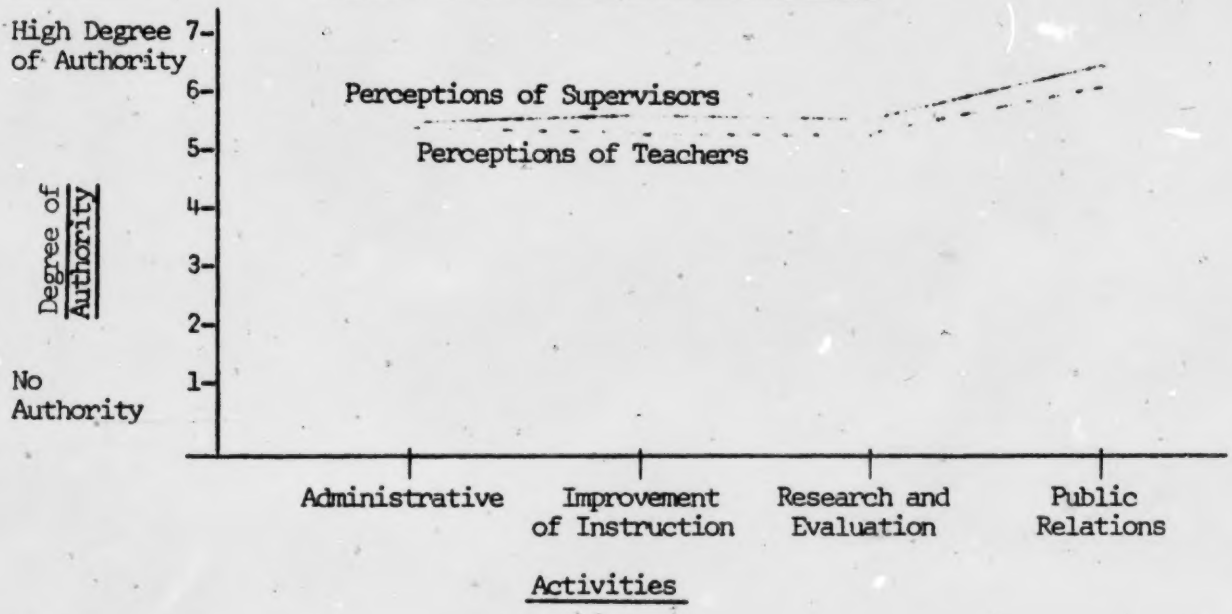

Figure 4 Expected Role of State Supervisors of Vocational

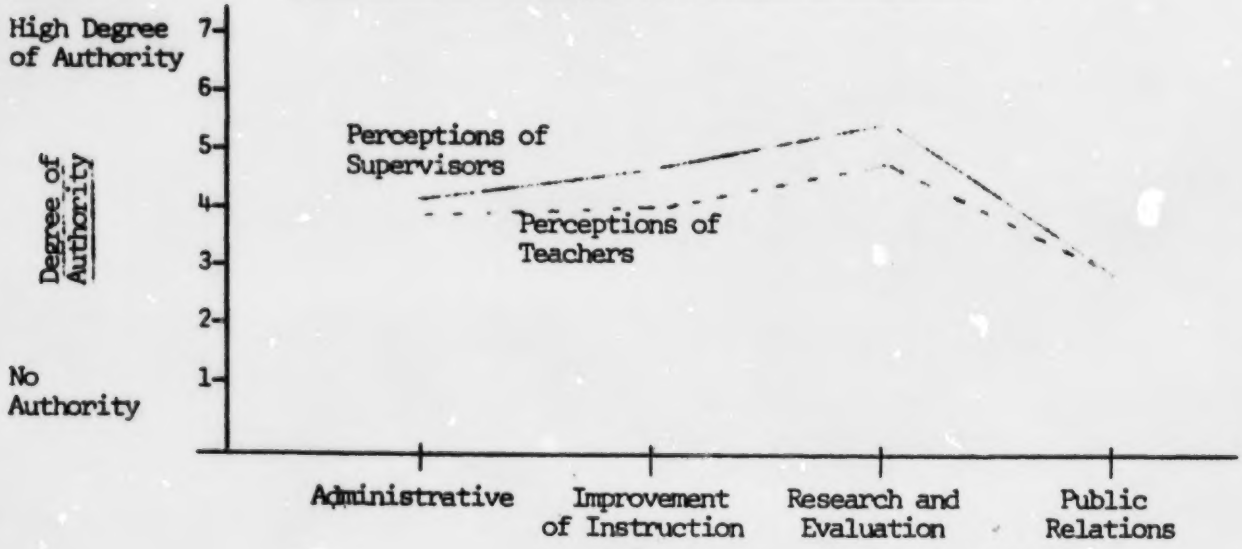

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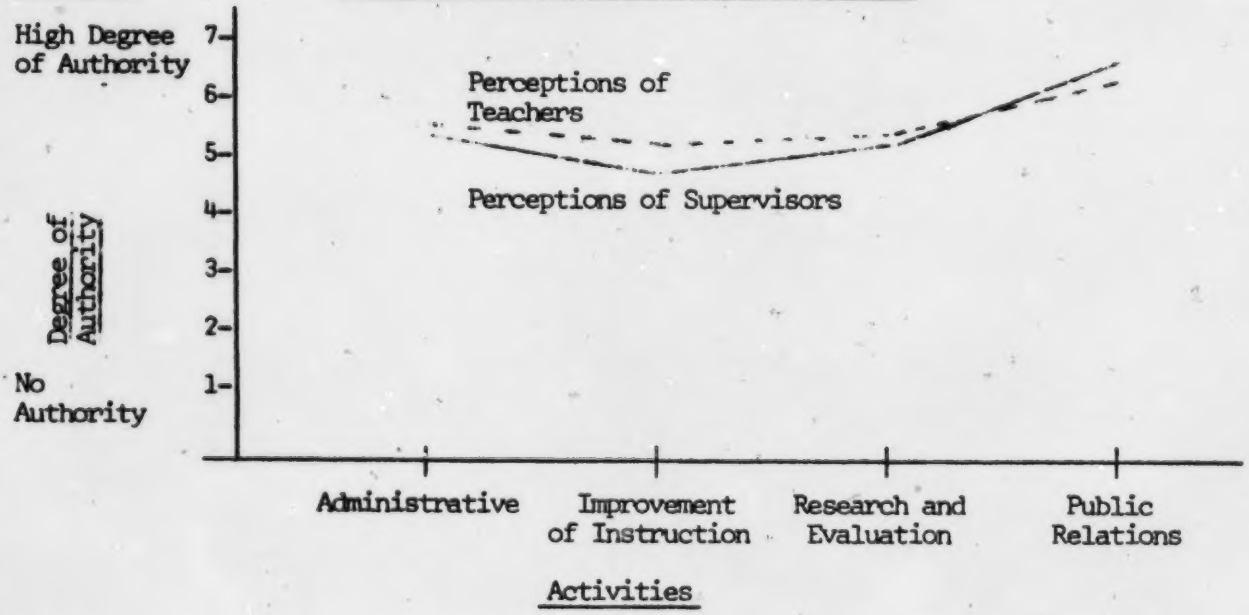
Figure 5 Expected Role of Local School Personnel



Low positive relationships, significant at the .05 level, exist between state-level administrative stucture and the following (Kendall's tau c coefficients ranged from .10 to .29):

1. Teacher's perceptions of current degree of authority of state supervisors of vocational agriculture for administrative, improvement of instruction, research and evaluation, and public relations activities.
2. Supervisors' perceptions of the current degree of authority of state supervisors of vocational agriculture for administrative, improvement of instruction, and public relations activities.
3. Teachers' perceptions of the expected degree of authority of state supervisors for administrative and improvement of instruction activities.
4. Supervisors' perceptions of the expected degree of authority of state supervisors for administrative improvement of instruction, research and evaluation, and public relations activities. Refer to Table 1.

Relationships were generally negative as expected between state-level administrative and improvement of instruction activities as perceived by teachers. No relationship was found to be significant between state-level administrative structure and the current or expected degree of authority of local school personnel as perceived by teachers or supervisors for any other groups of activities.

TABLE 1

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STATE-LEVEL ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF STATE SUPERVISORS

Group of Activities	Kendall's Tau c Coefficients			
	Current Role		Expected Role	
	Teachers	Supervisors	Teachers	Supervisors
Administrative	.20[a] (n=193)	.25[b] (n=86)	.15[a] (n=187)	.20[b] (n=85)
Improvement of Instruction	.21[a] (n=193)	.29[a] (n=87)	.15[a] (n=187)	.16[b] (n=85)
Research and Evaluation	.11[b] (n=191)	.12 (n=87)	.06 (n=189)	.18[b] (n=85)
Public Relations	.11[b] (n=188)	.20[b] (n=86)	.001 (n=187)	.21[b] (n=85)

[a] $p=.001$

[b] $p=.05$

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of state-level administration structure, states are categorized into four groups as follows:

Structure 1-Lowest Degree of Authority:

State supervisors of vocational agriculture have responsibilities in addition to vocational agriculture and the head state supervisor does not report directly to the state director of vocational education (16 states).

Structure 2-Third Highest Degree of Authority:

State supervisors of vocational agriculture have responsibilities in addition to vocational agriculture and the head state supervisor reports directly to the state director of vocational education (4 states).

Structure 3-Second Highest Degree of Authority:

State supervisors of vocational agriculture have no other responsibilities and the head state supervisor does not report directly to the state director of vocational education (15 states).

Structure 4-Highest Degree of Authority:

State supervisors of vocational agriculture have no other responsibilities and the head state supervisor reports directly to the state director of vocational education (15 states).

State supervisors and teachers have similar perceptions of the current role of state supervisors of vocational agriculture. Both groups perceive the current degree of authority of state supervisors to be in the 3.5 to 4.49 level of authority on a seven-point scale ranging from no authority to a high degree of authority, with authority for research and evaluation activities highest. Supervisors and teachers perceived the current degree of authority of local personnel to be highest for public relations activities.

Supervisors and teachers are also similar in their perception of the expected degree of authority of state supervisors. Both groups perceive the expected degree of authority of state supervisors to be at the same level as current degree of authority, with the highest expected degree of authority for research and evaluation activities. Supervisors and teachers perceive that the highest expected degree of authority of local personnel is public relations activities.

There is no difference between the perceptions of the current and expected roles of state supervisors as perceived by teachers and supervisors. There is little difference between the perceptions of the current and expected roles of local school personnel as perceived by teachers and supervisors.

State-level administrative structures which were expected to result in more authority were found to indicate that there are low positive relationships between state-level administrative structure and the current degree of authority of state supervisors for certain groups of activities as perceived by teachers and state supervisors. There are also low positive relationships between structure and the expected degree of authority of state supervisors for certain groups of activities as perceived by teachers and supervisors.

There are low negative relationships between state-level administrative structure and the current degree of authority of local school personnel for certain groups of activities as perceived by teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Further investigation into the actual activities performed by state supervisors, particularly in the area of improvement of instruction, is needed. In addition, there may be other persons such as local vocational agriculture supervisors, local vocational supervisors, general supervisors,

and administrators, and teacher educators who are or should be performing the activities that state supervisors of vocational agriculture perform.

Research is needed to identify and describe the barriers that prohibit supervisors from performing supervisory activities. The perceptions of local school personnel such as local supervisors and administrators concerning the role of state supervisors should be identified and described.

Research is needed to identify and describe the degree and nature of actual contact between state supervisors and local teachers and local programs of vocational agriculture. Additional research is needed to identify other factors that may be involved in the relationship between state-level administrative structure and the role of state supervisors. Those data may include organization of the total state education agency, sources of funding for state and local vocational agriculture programs, and the organization of local school districts including provisions for local supervision.

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APPENDIX

ACTIVITY STATEMENTS

Administrative Activities

1. Identify the need for vocational agriculture in the local community.
2. Approve a local program of vocational agriculture for state and federal funds.
3. Determine long-range objectives for a local program of vocational agriculture.
4. Determine the amount of local funds to be provided for a local program of vocational agriculture.
5. Determine the amount of state and federal funds to be provided for a local program of vocational agriculture.
6. Determine the facilities that will be provided for a local program of vocational agriculture.
7. Select the equipment to be provided for a local program of vocational agriculture.
8. Select the books and other teaching materials to be provided for a local program of vocational agriculture.
9. Determine the amount of instructional time to be provided in a local schedule for the vocational agriculture program.
10. Determine who may enroll in a local program of vocational agriculture.
11. Determine standards for supervised occupational experience programs of students in the vocational agriculture program.
12. Determine criteria for placement of graduates of local programs of vocational agriculture.
13. Determine criteria for use in selecting the teacher for a local program of vocational agriculture.
14. Identify qualified candidates for a teaching position in a local program of vocational agriculture.
15. Select the teacher for a local program of vocational agriculture.
16. Determine the salary of a local teacher of vocational agriculture.
17. Determine the policies pertaining to the dismissal of a teacher of vocational agriculture.

Improvement of Instruction Activities

18. Determine how teacher effort will be utilized in conducting a local program of vocational agriculture.

19. Determine how the efforts of a teacher of vocational agriculture will be utilized in general school activities.

20. Determine the course content of a high school program of vocational agriculture.

21. Determine the adult education program to be provided in a local program of vocational agriculture.

22. Determine changes in direction and emphasis in a local program of vocational agriculture.

23. Evaluate the teaching of the high school program of vocational agriculture.

24. Evaluate the teaching of the adult education program in vocational agriculture.

25. Identify the in-service education needs of a high school teacher of vocational agriculture.

26. Determine the program of professional improvement of a teacher of vocational agriculture.

27. Provide for in-service education needs of a teacher of vocational agriculture.

Research and Evaluation Activities

28. Identify problems in a local program of vocational agriculture.

29. Determine solutions to problems in a local program of vocational agriculture.

30. Identify research efforts pertaining to the development of a local program of vocational agriculture.

31. Evaluate a local program of vocational agriculture.

Public Relations Activities

32. Identify the public relations needs in a local program of vocational agriculture.

33. Identify the public relations media to be utilized in a local program of vocational agriculture.

34. Determine the public relations activities to be carried out in a local program of vocational agriculture.

Public Relations Activities (cont'd)

35. Promote desirable relationships between a local program of vocational agriculture and the total school community.

36. Promote desirable relationships between a local program of vocational agriculture and organizations and agencies in the local community.

37. Identify persons to serve on the advisory committee for a local program of vocational agriculture.

RKB/jvs